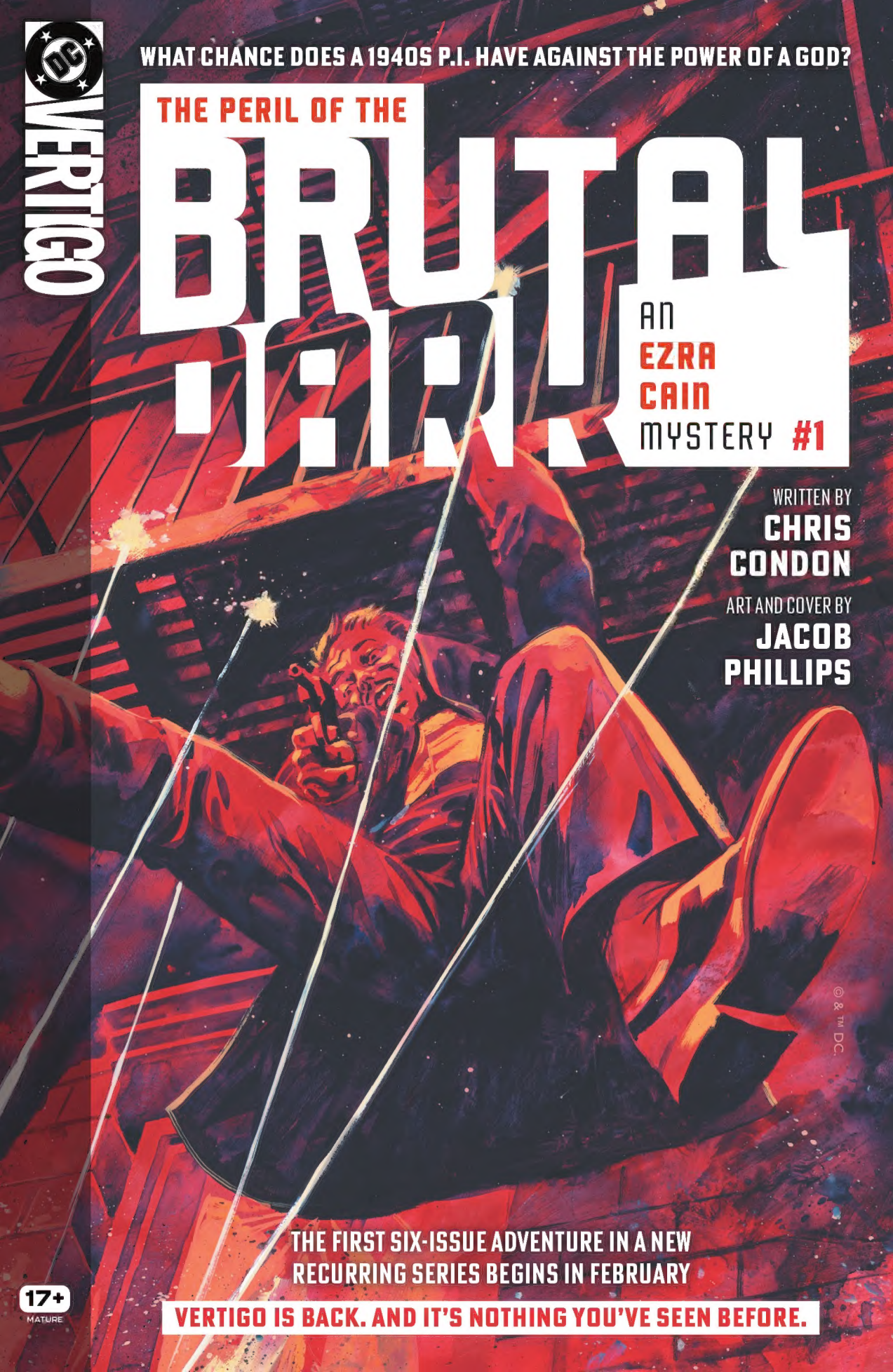
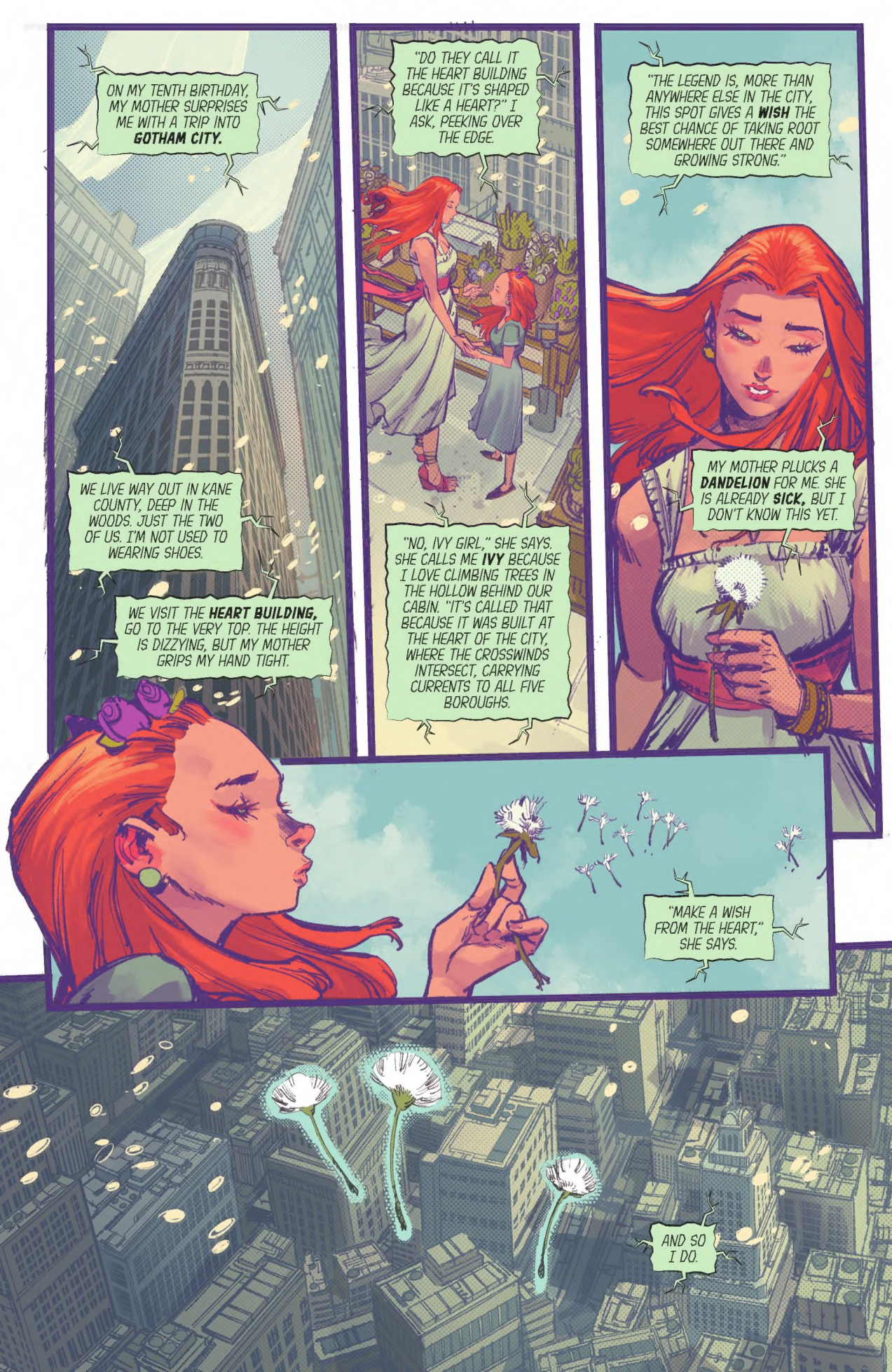
ABSOLUTE
BATMAN
DC
ALL IN
15+ TEEN+ 17
DRAGOTTA
SNYDER
CANETE
MARTIN


VERTIGO
WHAT CHANCE DOES A 1940S P.I. HAVE AGAINST THE POWER OF A GOD?
THE PERIL OF THE
BRUTAL DARK
AN EZRA CAIN MYSTERY #1
WRITTEN BY
CHRIS CONDON
ART AND COVER BY
JACOB PHILLIPS
© & TM DC.
THE FIRST SIX-ISSUE ADVENTURE IN A NEW RECURRING SERIES BEGINS IN FEBRUARY
VERTIGO IS BACK. AND IT'S NOTHING YOU'VE SEEN BEFORE.
17+
MATURE


ON MY TENTH BIRTHDAY, MY MOTHER SURPRISES ME WITH A TRIP INTO **GOTHAM CITY.**
WE LIVE WAY OUT IN KANE COUNTY, DEEP IN THE WOODS. JUST THE TWO OF US. I'M NOT USED TO WEARING SHOES.
WE VISIT THE **HEART BUILDING,** GO TO THE VERY TOP. THE HEIGHT IS DIZZYING, BUT MY MOTHER GRIPS MY HAND TIGHT.
"DO THEY CALL IT THE HEART BUILDING BECAUSE IT'S SHAPED LIKE A HEART?" I ASK, PEEKING OVER THE EDGE.
"NO, IVY GIRL," SHE SAYS. SHE CALLS ME **IVY** BECAUSE I LOVE CLIMBING TREES IN THE HOLLOW BEHIND OUR CABIN. "IT'S CALLED THAT BECAUSE IT WAS BUILT AT THE HEART OF THE CITY, WHERE THE CROSSWINDS INTERSECT, CARRYING CURRENTS TO ALL FIVE BOROUGHS.
"THE LEGEND IS, MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE CITY, THIS SPOT GIVES A **WISH** THE BEST CHANCE OF TAKING ROOT SOMEWHERE OUT THERE AND GROWING STRONG."
MY MOTHER PLUCKS A **DANDELION** FOR ME. SHE IS ALREADY **SICK,** BUT I DON'T KNOW THIS YET.
"MAKE A WISH FROM THE HEART," SHE SAYS.
AND SO I DO.

NOW.
HELLO?
WHOEVER'S UP HERE, THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY.
YOU NEED TO--
POP!
WHAT THE...
SKREE!
#%&@ HELL!
WELCOME, OFFICER...
...TO MY WISH.

ABSOLUTE BATMAN

THE SEVENTH KINGDOM – PART 1

SCOTT SNYDER
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FRANK MARTIN
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VARIANT COVERS

SABRINA FUTCH
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

KATIE KUBERT
EDITOR

BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE WITH **BILL FINGER**

WHAT IN GOD'S NAME ARE WE LOOKING AT, SARGE?
DAMNED IF I KNOW, LIEUTENANT. HEADS UP. HILL JUST ISSUED A FULL BIOHAZ. FIVE-BLOCK RADIUS. OUR JOB IS NOW TO WATCH OUT FOR ANYONE TRYING TO GET IN.
PFFT. "IN?" WHAT KIND OF PSYCHO WOULD--
RRRRRRRRR

I'M IN.
TALK.
GCPD INTEL INDICATES THE AIR IS HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH AN UNKNOWN BIOLOGICAL AGENT. SEVEN OF BULLOCK'S BEST WENT IN AHEAD OF YOU AND...HUH.
"HUH" WHAT?
APPARENTLY, THEY HUMPED IN AN AUGGIED-UP M.U.C. WITH--
ENGLISH, PENNYWORTH.
SORRY. AN AUGMENTED MOBILE ULTRASONIC CANNON. AN EXTREMELY POWERFUL MILITARY-GRADE WEAPON THAT USES COMPRESSED SOUND WAVES TO SEPARATE CELLS. WHATEVER IS IN THERE...JUST BE CAREFUL, KID.

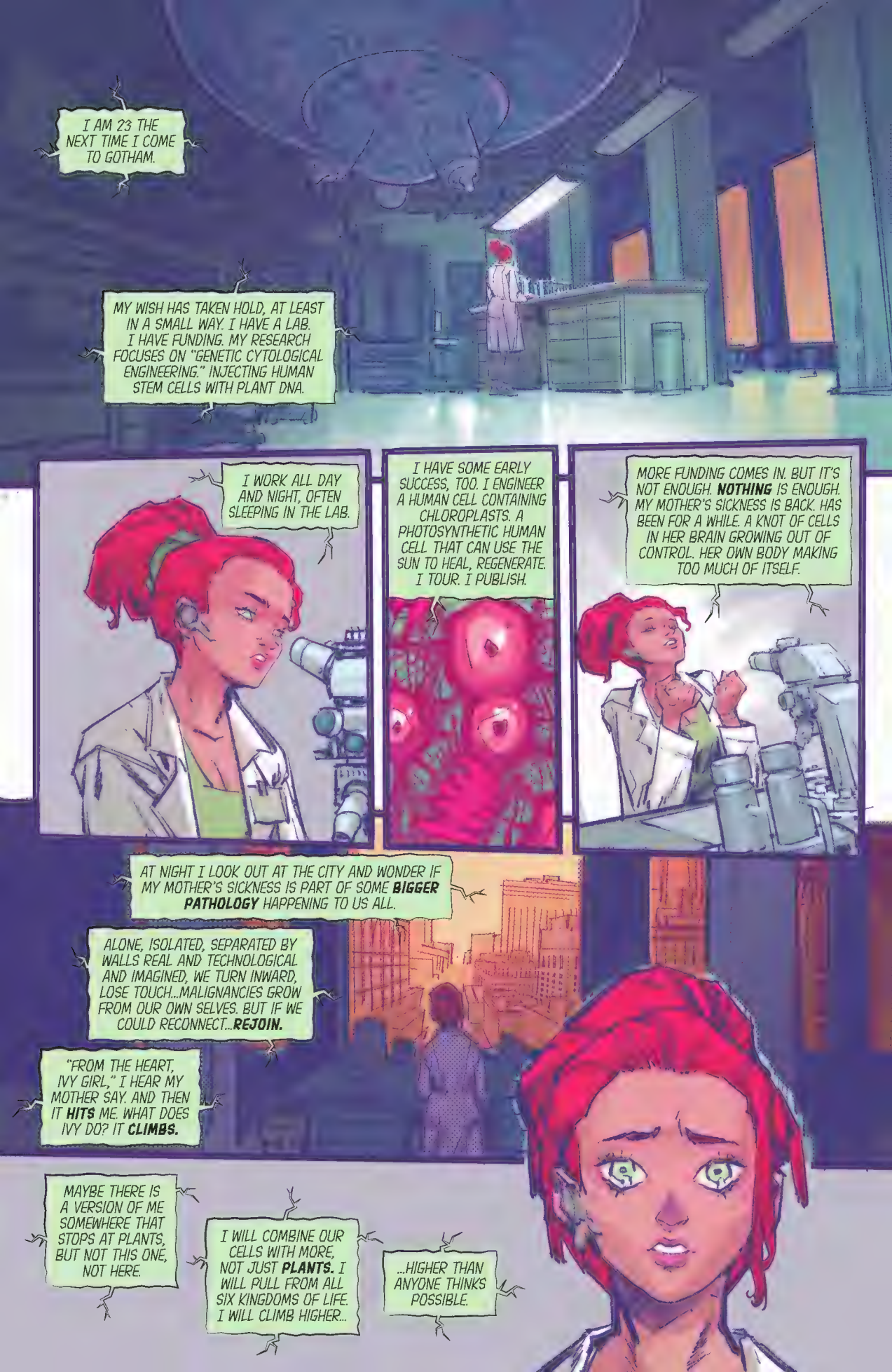
I HAVE EYES ON THE OFFICERS.
I'M LOOKING RIGHT AT THEM.
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. MAYBE THAT STUFF IN THE AIR IS--
AND I'M LOOKING RIGHT AT THE POLICE SCANS. THERE ARE NO HUMAN SIGNATURES ON YOUR FLOOR OR ANY FLOOR NEAR IT.
GK?
WHATEVER YOU'RE LOOKING AT...
...THEY'RE NOT PEOPLE.
NOT ANYMORE.

ONE WEEK AGO.
Batman Combat Journal.
I find something today. I'm in the sewer looking for him again and suddenly there it is in the water.
The sight makes my stomach turn. Reptiles shed when they're getting bigger, not smaller...
I force out the thoughts. The arrowhead* is working. Waylon is getting better. That's what I choose to believe.
I also choose to believe that he's still my friend.
*SEE ABSOLUTE BATMAN #16! --K.K.
That they all are.
YOU SET FOOT ON THIS BLOCK ONE MORE TIME, WE HAVE ORDERS FROM MR. COBBLEPOT TO #$%& YOU UP, WAYNE.
YOU TELL OZZIE I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW. AND THE DAY AFTER THAT...
...AND THE DAY AFTER THAT AND THE--
"I WILL NEVER BE KING. THEY CALL ME JACK. MY QUEEN I MET IN THE FIELD OUT BACK. A PRINCE IS BORN FROM OUR UNMATCHED PAIR, BUT MY LINE ENDS WITH MY HEIR."
COME ON, EDDIE. WHAT AM I?

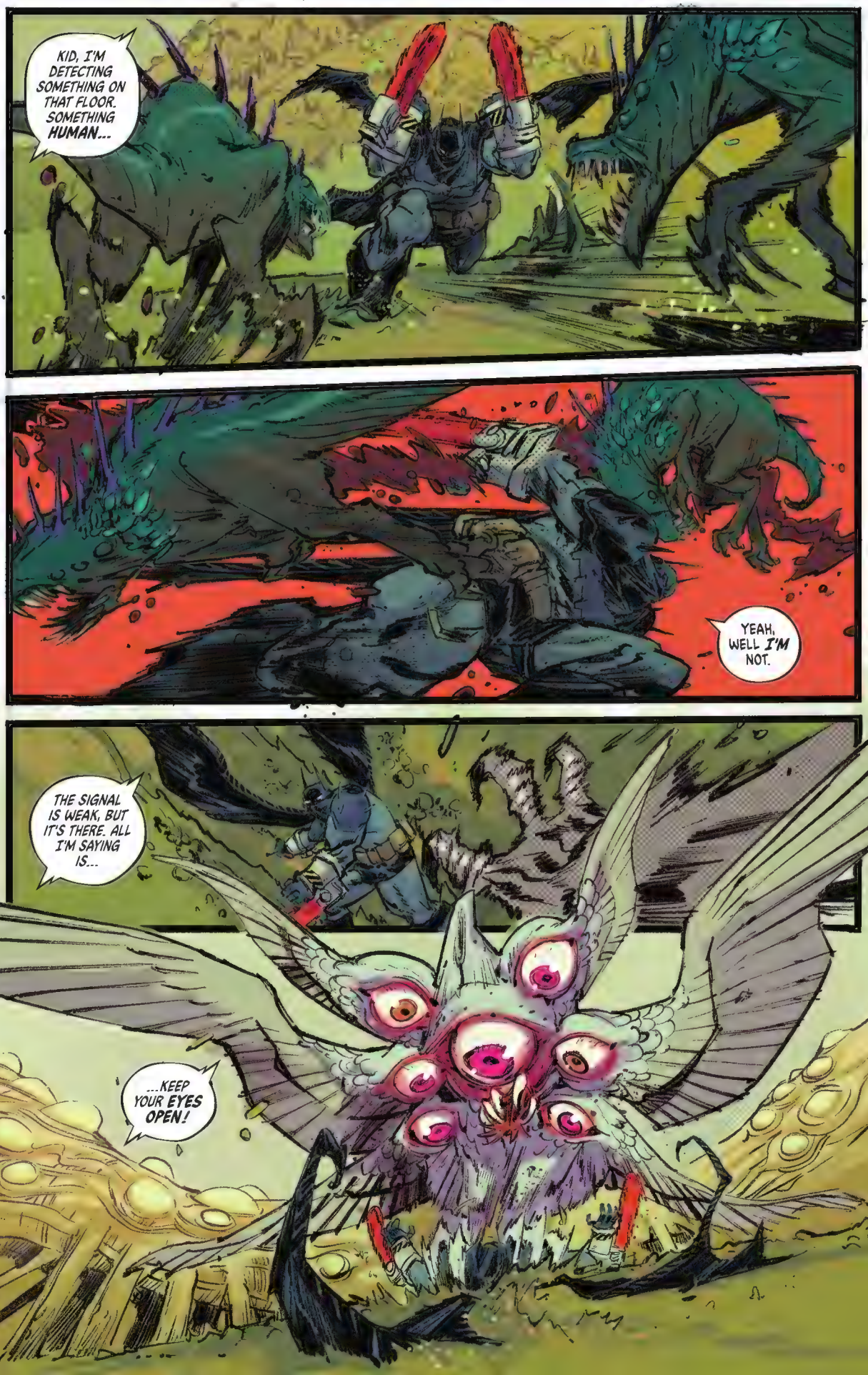
I'M SORRY I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER FOR YOU, BRUCE. TRULY.
BUT HIS CONDITION, DR. THOMPKINS... I THOUGHT TO HEAL, HIS SKULL NEEDED--
ANOTHER MONTH AT LEAST. YES. RIGHT NOW, HARVEY'S HEAD IS LITERALLY SPLIT INTO *TWO HALVES*, BARELY CONNECTED. WHEN THE NURSES CAME IN THIS MORNING, THOUGH, HE WAS JUST...
...GONE.
Anchor yourself. Feel the pavement through your soles. Nothing has changed. At least nothing that **matters.**
But everything feels different. Even **Batman.**
Ever since Bane... they love him. He's theirs now, too, in a way I didn't mean to happen.
He was never supposed to be the story, just the means... but he's everywhere now.
Sometimes I see that bat...
...and I barely know what the #$%& I'm looking at.

HSSSSS!
SPLORCH
THESE THINGS, FROM THE DATA, THEY'RE A BLEND OF HUMAN AND PLANT DNA!
THE SPORES IN THE AIR MUST BE SOME KIND OF RECOMBINANT MUTAGEN.
MMMPH!
WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP THAT MASK ON!
GASP!
SSSSSS
KID! I JUST SAID--
I KNOW!
ZZZZ
SKREEE!
YOU NEED TO--
I #$%& KNOW!

THE CAPE...IT'S DENSE FIBER. IT'LL WORK AS A BARRIER. BUT THOSE *THINGS.* THEY WEREN'T *JUST* HUMAN AND PLANT HYBRIDS. THERE WAS *MORE* TO THEM THAN THAT...
YOU CAN TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT BACK AT THE *BUNKER.* WE'RE *ABORTING* THIS MISSION RIGHT--
SHUT UP AND LISTEN! I SAW SOMETHING LIKE THEM ONCE BEFORE. WHEN I WAS IN THAT PLACE...
*...ARK M.** I NEED YOU TO LOOK SOMETHING UP FOR ME, PENNYWORTH. A *NAME.*
WHAT IS IT?
"ISLEY."
*SEE ABSOLUTE BATMAN #10! --K.K.


I AM 23 THE NEXT TIME I COME TO GOTHAM.
MY WISH HAS TAKEN HOLD, AT LEAST IN A SMALL WAY. I HAVE A LAB. I HAVE FUNDING. MY RESEARCH FOCUSES ON "GENETIC CYTOLOGICAL ENGINEERING." INJECTING HUMAN STEM CELLS WITH PLANT DNA.
I WORK ALL DAY AND NIGHT, OFTEN SLEEPING IN THE LAB.
I HAVE SOME EARLY SUCCESS, TOO. I ENGINEER A HUMAN CELL CONTAINING CHLOROPLASTS. A PHOTOSYNTHETIC HUMAN CELL THAT CAN USE THE SUN TO HEAL, REGENERATE. I TOUR. I PUBLISH.
MORE FUNDING COMES IN. BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. **NOTHING** IS ENOUGH. MY MOTHER'S SICKNESS IS BACK. HAS BEEN FOR A WHILE. A KNOT OF CELLS IN HER BRAIN GROWING OUT OF CONTROL. HER OWN BODY MAKING TOO MUCH OF ITSELF.
AT NIGHT I LOOK OUT AT THE CITY AND WONDER IF MY MOTHER'S SICKNESS IS PART OF SOME **BIGGER PATHOLOGY** HAPPENING TO US ALL.
ALONE, ISOLATED, SEPARATED BY WALLS REAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL AND IMAGINED, WE TURN INWARD, LOSE TOUCH...MALIGNANCIES GROW FROM OUR OWN SELVES. BUT IF WE COULD RECONNECT...**REJOIN.**
"FROM THE HEART, IVY GIRL," I HEAR MY MOTHER SAY. AND THEN IT **HITS** ME. WHAT DOES IVY DO? IT **CLIMBS.**
MAYBE THERE IS A VERSION OF ME SOMEWHERE THAT STOPS AT PLANTS, BUT NOT THIS ONE, NOT HERE.
I WILL COMBINE OUR CELLS WITH MORE, NOT JUST **PLANTS.** I WILL PULL FROM ALL SIX KINGDOMS OF LIFE. I WILL CLIMB HIGHER...
...HIGHER THAN ANYONE THINKS POSSIBLE.

Stay grounded, Bruce. Stick to routine.
The first Saturday of the month, at nine a.m., you visit him.
He might never talk, might never really explain why he did it, but still, you sit and you wait.
I'M SORRY, BRUCE. HE ISN'T COMING.
I'M AFRAID IT'S UP TO HIM, AND HE SAID HE JUST... "DOESN'T WANT TO MEET ANYMORE. EVER."
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? HE HAS TO.
BUT HE CAN'T--
--YOU CAN'T DO THAT!
YOU HEAR ME, CHILL?! I KNOW YOU'RE BACK THERE!
THIS IS WHAT WE DO!

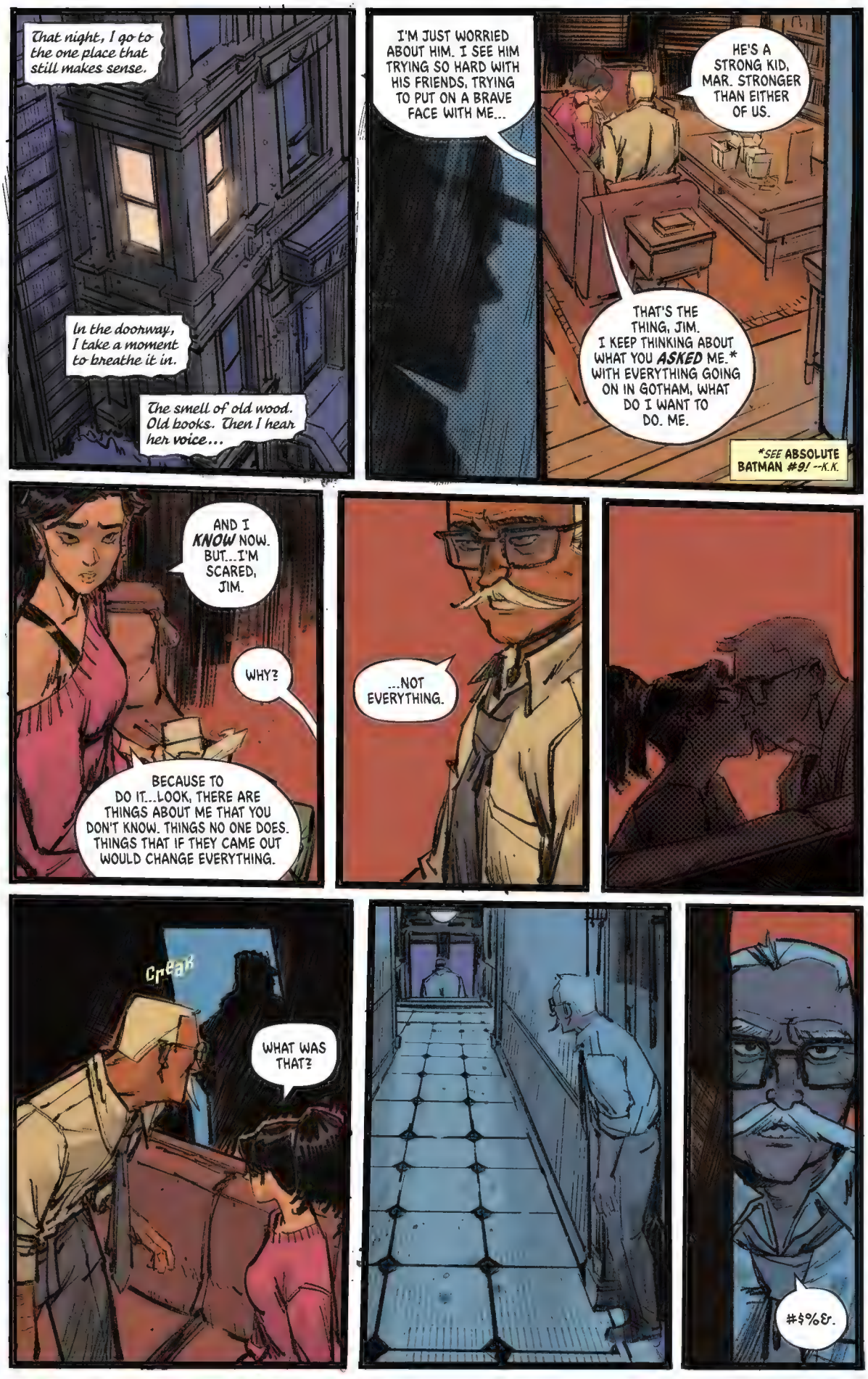

KID, I'M DETECTING SOMETHING ON THAT FLOOR. SOMETHING HUMAN...
YEAH, WELL I'M NOT.
THE SIGNAL IS WEAK, BUT IT'S THERE. ALL I'M SAYING IS...
...KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

AND YOU WERE ON TO SOMETHING BEFORE. PAMELA ISLEY. M.D., M.S., PH.D., A WHOLE BLOODY ALPHABET. SMART ONE, SHE WAS.
"WAS"?
SHE DIED, AGE 25. LOOKING AT HER OBIT NOW.
WRITTEN BY HER MOTHER. "YOU'VE CLIMBED FARTHER THAN WE CAN FOLLOW...
"...TO A LAND OF BETTER ANGELS."
BTMMNNMPH!
GASP! BATMAN! THE TEAM, WHERE ARE THEY?!
THEY'RE GONE, OFFICER GORDON.

GONE? WE GOT SEPARATED AND I...
BRASS DIDN'T TELL US ANYTHING. THEY JUST SENT US IN WITH THIS AUGGIED-UP M.U.C. AND--SORRY, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, DO YOU?
OF COURSE I DO.
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU--
--LOOK, I WAS SENT IN HERE TO STOP WHATEVER IS HAPPENING UP THERE. ME. YOU CAN JOIN ME, AS MY PARTNER, BUT YOU AND ME? THIS TIME, WE'RE A TEA--

YOU PIECE OF--
POOM
YOU OKAY IN THERE? THE READINGS... IT LOOKS LIKE THE HIGHER YOU GO, THE DENSER THE SPORES GET.
KID?
I'M FINE.
I'M GOING UP. DON'T GET IN MY WAY.

THEY'RE TRYING TO STOP ME.
BUT I WON'T LET THEM. I'M TOO CLOSE NOW.
THE **BREAKTHROUGHS** THESE PAST FEW WEEKS...**HUMAN** CELLS REMADE WITH **NEW DNA.** FIRST WITH PLANTAE, THEN ANIMALIA...FUNGI, PROTISTA, EUBACTERIA, AND ARCHAEBACTERIA. HUMAN CELLS RECONNECTED TO NATURE, TO A COMMON BASE. CELLS THAT CAN USE THE BEST OF ALL LIFE TO MEND...
...A CURE FOR SO MUCH. I THINK OF MY MOTHER. FULL OF TUBES. YELLOWING. ON A PILLOW THAT CRUNCHES LIKE DEAD LEAVES.
MY SPONSORS, THOUGH...ALL THEY WANT TO DO IS DIVIDE UP EACH DISCOVERY, INDIVIDUATE, SEPARATE...OLD MEN WHO ONLY THINK OF WHAT MY WORK CAN DO FOR **THEM.**
FINE. I'LL TAKE MY RESEARCH SOMEWHERE ELSE, THEN.
I'LL DO IT **TONIGHT.**
I'M COMING FOR YOU, MOTHER. I PROMISE.


That night, I go to the one place that still makes sense.
In the doorway, I take a moment to breathe it in.
The smell of old wood. Old books. Then I hear her voice...
I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT HIM. I SEE HIM TRYING SO HARD WITH HIS FRIENDS, TRYING TO PUT ON A BRAVE FACE WITH ME...
HE'S A STRONG KID, MAR. STRONGER THAN EITHER OF US.
THAT'S THE THING, JIM. I KEEP THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU ASKED ME.* WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON IN GOTHAM, WHAT DO I WANT TO DO. ME.
*SEE ABSOLUTE BATMAN #9! --K.K.
AND I KNOW NOW. BUT...I'M SCARED, JIM.
WHY?
BECAUSE TO DO IT...LOOK, THERE ARE THINGS ABOUT ME THAT YOU DON'T KNOW. THINGS NO ONE DOES. THINGS THAT IF THEY CAME OUT WOULD CHANGE EVERYTHING.
...NOT EVERYTHING.
Creak
WHAT WAS THAT?
#$%&.

THE BAT? WE DON'T PARTNER WITH PEOPLE, HARLEY.
YEAH, WELL, I SAY NEW YEAR, NEW RULES.
IT'S LIKE THE WHOLE CITY HAS GONE CRAZY. ALL BECAUSE OF HIM.
EVEN IF YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT... WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO ABOUT IT, DICK?
HERE'S TO THE RETURN OF GOTHAM'S PRODIGAL SON, JACK GRIMM!
Is it him changing things?
Is he behind it?
Or is it me?
Did Batman do all this?
What's the real source?

PENNYWORTH? COME IN.
ZZZTTT-- KID, SPORES-- ZZZ!
I'M HERE. I MADE IT. I'M AT THE TOP.
YES, YOU ARE.
ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL?
DR. ISLEY?

I USED TO BE, A LIFETIME AGO.
KID, CAN YOU HEAR ME?! I'M GETTING NOTHING HUMAN UP THERE!
SHE'S NOT ISLEY, NOT ANYMORE. WAIT UNTIL SHE GETS CLOSER, AND THEN USE THE M.U.C. YOU HEAR ME?! SHE'S-- ZZTZT
I'M ALMOST TO THE DOOR WHEN I HEAR THE BOLT LOCK INTO PLACE.
UNH!
I'LL BE TAKING THE WEAPON, THANK YOU.
ZZZT-- NOW, KID!
IT'S GONE!
IT'S OKAY. NOTHING HERE WILL HURT YOU.

DON'T BE AFRAID, BATMAN. I KNOW HOW FRIGHTENING CHANGE CAN BE. BUT IT'S TIME TO LET GO.
Head down, eyes forward. Hold it together.
RAHHH!
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?!
FFWOOSH

SUDDENLY THE FIRE IS EVERYWHERE.
I REMEMBER FEELING SO TERRIFIED, BUT MORE THAN THAT, SO ANGRY.
ANGRY BECAUSE I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE END.
PENNYWORTH? IS SHE DOWN? WHAT ARE YOU SEEING?!
BUT IT WASN'T...

...IT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING.
KID! I'M SEEING SOMETHING...SOMETHING BIG. IT'S UP THERE WITH YOU. IT'S PART HUMAN, PART PLANT, IT'S ZZZZZT... BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT, IT'S PART EVERYTHING.
ALL I SEE...IS MORE OF HER.
TIME TO LET GO, BATMAN.
LET GO.
LET GO.
COME ON, THEN! TRY IT! YOU'RE NOT EVEN REAL!
NO, THEY'RE NOT...

...BUT
I AM.

WHAT...
SSHHHH. WELCOME, BATMAN...
...TO YOUR WISH.

EPILOGUE.
I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU'D ANSWER, ESPECIALLY AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
IT'S ME. I WASN'T FOLLOWED... ARE YOU STILL THERE?
WE'RE ALWAYS HERE, MARTHA. WE KNEW ONE DAY YOU'D COME BACK...
...TO THE COURT OF OWLS.
TO BE CONTINUED...

DUCK DUCK DUCK.
EDDIE STALLION, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
THERE'S A WHOLE MENAGERIE KILL TEAM OUTSIDE MY APARTMENT COMPLEX.
BUDDY, THEY PUT OUT A COMPANY-WIDE ALERT. THERE'S A HUGE BOUNTY OUT ON YOU. IT'S ON SIGHT.
IF THEY SEE YOU, THEY'RE GOING TO KILL YOU.
END OF LIFE
#1 PREVIEW
(15+ FRIENDLY VERSION!)
WRITER
KYLE STARKS
ARTIST
STEVE PUGH
COLORIST
CHRIS O'HALLORAN
LETTERER
BECCA CAREY
I'M YOUR HANDLER AND A PROFESSIONAL, SO I'M GOING TO HELP YOU OUT.
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE THE BIGGEST, DUMBEST PIECE OF SPIT I'VE EVER MET.
AAAAAAND EVEN THOUGH YOU TRIED TO DUCK MY SISTER.
I'M A HIT MAN, KARLA. YOU KNOW I'M ALWAYS GOING TO SHOOT MY SHOT.
AND SHE LOOKED SO GOOD IN THAT SILLY LITTLE DRESS.
YOU WERE MY GUEST AT HER WEDDING, YOU RIDICULOUS MORON.
WELL, SHE DIDN'T GO FOR IT, SO I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE STILL HARPING ON IT.
EDDIE, YOU GOTTA TELL ME-- WHAT DID YOU DO?

What he did. One hour ago.
I'M NOT GOING TO LIE, DEVIN. I WAS PRETTY PISSED OFF WHEN YOU BROUGHT AN UNKNOWN ASSET TO THE JOB.
BUT THIS GUY IS SEXUALLY EXPLICIT METAPHOR!
THAT'S HOW MY BOY EDDIE STALLION DOES IT.

WHEN YOU HIRE THE THREE MURDER BROTHERS TO BE YOUR MUSCLE, YOU GET THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS.
BUT LITTLE BROTHER JOE GOT PULLED OVER SPEEDING AND WAS PICKED UP ON SOME OUTSTANDING WARRANTS.
BANG BANG
HEY LOOK! A STRAGGLER!
YOU SAID TODAY WAS THE ONLY TIME THIS COULD GO DOWN. SO MY BRO ETHAN AND I HAD TO MAKE A SUBSTITUTION.
WE KNOW EDDIE STALLION HERE FROM WAY BACK IN BASIC TRAINING. HE'S AS LEGIT AS THEY COME.
THIS MOTHERDUCKER IS MENAGERIE, MY GUY.
MENAGERIE? THE INTERNATIONAL CABAL OF ANIMAL-THEMED HIT MEN?
DUDES PUTTING ON MASKS AND CALLING THEMSELVES "THE LION"?
COME ON. THAT'S FAKE AS HELL.
IT'S REAL AS DUCK IS WHAT IT IS, DUMMY.
IF YOU KNEW WHAT HE PUT ME THROUGH YOU WOULDN'T--
THAT'S MY BAD, EDDIE. MY BAD.
EDDIE'S SECOND GENERATION MENAGERIE, TOO. HIS DAD--
HEY! WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THAT ASSHOLE.

YOU'RE A GENIUS BRINGING EDDIE, BRO. THIS IS THE EASIEST MONEY WE'LL EVER MAKE.
THE *MOST* WE'LL EVER MAKE, TOO.
HEY, I GOT THE VAULT OPEN!
OKAY, LET'S GET THIS JOB OVER WITH.
WHOA! DO YOU GUYS SEE THIS LITTLE WEIRDO?
WHAT KIND OF DEVIANT DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO HAVE A LITTLE CREEP STATUE?

THAT'S EDGAR ALLAN POE, EDDIE.
WHO?
YOU KNOW, "QUOTE THE RAVEN NEVERMORE" AND ALL THAT SPIT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE DUCK YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
...NEVERMORE?
IS THAT WHERE THE ELVES LIVE?
HEY, GET IN HERE ALREADY! WE NEED YOU GUYS TO START LOADING THIS SPIT UP.
HEY, DEVIN, WHO'D YOU SAY THIS PLACE BELONGED TO?
SOME RICH MOTHERDUCKER ABOUT TO GET POORER.
IT'S THE DUCKING JACKPOT, BOYS!
JEWELS, CASH, BEARER BONDS, GOLD.
IT'S A SMORGASBORD OF BOOTY.
LET'S GOOOOOO!

THIS IS A SHOEBOX JUST FILLED WITH DIAMONDS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS IS WORTH?
LET'S START GETTING THIS STUFF OUT OF HERE. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, BOYS!
THINK THINK THINK
YOU HAVE PASSED THE FINAL TEST. YOU HAVE PLEDGED YOUR ALLEGIANCE. ONLY ONE STEP REMAINS, LEGACY DESIGNATE STALLION--
JUST A COUPLE H.R. NOTES TO GO OVER BEFORE WE WRAP UP.
MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY IN REGARDS TO DISRESPECTING A REGION BOSS OR THEIR PROPERTY.
AND WHEN IT COMES TO KILLING ANOTHER MENAGERIE MEMBER THERE'S QUITE A BIT OF PROTOCOL SO LET'S GET STARTED--
Two hours later.
AAAAAAND INITIAL HERE, HERE, AND HERE. PERFECT.
WELCOME TO THE MENAGERIE!
DUCK!

DEVIN, WHICH OF THESE MEN IS YOUR BROTHER?
ETHAN?
THAT'S ETHAN RIGHT THERE.
BANG BANG
YO, EDDIE! WHAT THE HELL, MAN?
THAT STUPID BASSHOLE WHO HIRED YOU JUST HAD US ROB THE EAST COAST HEAD OF THE MENAGERIE, DEVIN. THE RAVEN.
YOUR DUDE DUCKED US. AND NO ONE DUCKS EDDIE STALLION AND GETS AWAY WITH IT.
I MEAN IF THEY BAD DUCKED ME, THEY DON'T GET AWAY WITH IT. IF THEY SCREWED ME OVER OR WHATEVER.
NOT LIKE THEY HAD SEX WITH ME. I DON'T KILL PEOPLE WHEN THEY--
YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU GET IT.
HEY, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? THAT WE ROBBED THE MENAGERIE?
IT MEANS WE'RE SUPER DUCKED, MAN!
CONTINUED (AND UNCENSORED!) IN END OF LIFE #1 ON SALE IN FEBRUARY

CELEBRATING
40 YEARS
OF THE COMICS MASTERPIECE.
© & ™ DC.
BATMAN™
THE DARK KNIGHT™ RETURNS
BY FRANK MILLER
WITH KLAUS JANSON AND LYNN VARLEY
BATMAN
40
THE DARK
KNIGHT
RETURNS

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON ALL IN

TRINITY
DAUGHTER OF WONDER WOMAN

INTERVIEW WITH TOM KING

Writer Tom King and artist Daniel Sampere introduced Trinity in 2023 as the daughter of Wonder Woman and Steve Trevor. The character (familiarly known as Lizzie) instantly captivated fans and headlined her own six-issue series, the aptly titled *Trinity: Daughter of Wonder Woman*, from King and artist Belén Ortega—featuring Lizzie at three different ages in a time-trekking adventure intersecting with some of the most pivotal moments in DC history. With *Trinity: Daughter of Wonder Woman* available soon as a softcover collected edition, King reflects on what makes this story so special.

Tom, it's fair to say you're primarily known for writing a darker type of story at DC, and *Trinity* feels like you're having a different type of fun. What did this story mean to you and how does it stand out from your other DC work?

Trinity is hands-down one of my favorite writing experiences I've ever had. Sometimes I write things—*Mister Miracle*, *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow*—and there's a little magic in it, and when it's coming out I can see how it's connecting with the audience, see how it's connecting with me, see how it's connecting with my children. *Trinity* has that.

I love my sad, depressing comics, don't get me wrong. But I also love a different kind of comic. I grew up on these wonderful things I'd read in the newspaper that made me smile and laugh and were silly—and were actually kind of deep. If you read *Peanuts*, if you read *Calvin and Hobbes*, it's funny and silly day-to-day, but the whole thing has an incredible message about imagination and depression and relating to other people and hope in the world. All that stuff is in there, but it's disguised behind a warm, welcoming humor. I wanted to make a book that did that.

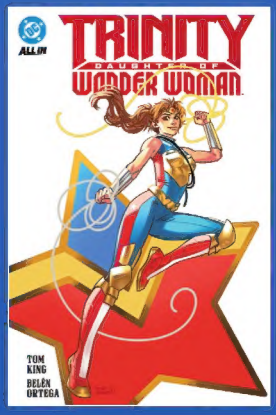
It's fun seeing the tone of the story, and how you've juxtaposed it with past DC events—including going back to territory you're very familiar with in the Bat/Cat wedding.

We live in very heavy times. You always want to give people a break from that. That's part of the power of comics.

But on the other side of it, of all the books I'm writing, this is the one that makes me cry. There are these very emotional moments about these three young women going through this experience. They're trying to reconnect with their father. They're also looking to connect with each other through the unique experience of being alone in the world—being the daughter of Wonder Woman. How unique that is, how isolating that can be. There are these moments of utter revelation where they find each other, and it connects you to a deeper emotion. While you're laughing at silly dog jokes.

Speaking of dogs, the homage variant covers featuring corgis are incredible.

I went to Belén Ortega—who is brilliant—and asked, what do you want to draw? "I want a samurai story and a corgi story." I was like, "How am I going to do a story about samurai and corgis?" It became so much fun. It started with this utterly bizarre problem I did not know how I could solve and became the solution for the whole thing.



TRINITY
DAUGHTER OF WONDER WOMAN
ALL IN
a Corgi in the Family
Part Two
Robin is about to die at the hands of the Joker.
And Wonder Girl can do nothing about it.
Or can she?
by KING, ORTEGA & GUERRERO

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